

Discussion with Christleton Parish Council – October 2008

Christleton Traffic Action Group reported the overall results from public meetings, the village questionnaire, correspondence with residents and further measurements made by the Group. The discussion was supported by a PowerPoint presentation. The following is the text from the presentation with some additions which were made verbally at the time.

Traffic Issues in Christleton

Topics covered:

1. Speed and volume of traffic
2. Size of vehicles
3. Parking in the village centre
4. Parking near the High School
5. Changes to the village centre and alternative routes through the village
6. Plough Lane/Quarry Lane junction
7. Parking near the Primary School
8. Parking in Birch Heath Lane and around the Village Green
9. Closure of roads

Notes:

The Traffic Action Group has tried to be strictly impartial in previously published material. This report does include opinions and conclusions from the TAG. The source of opinions and information have been indicated in the report by:

- (TAG) for the Traffic Action Group
- (Qu) for results from the questionnaire
- (Mtg) refers to the public meeting (Nov 2007)

1. Speed and volume of traffic

Widespread concern shown in survey (Qu)

Christleton is subjected to two rat-run flows

- A41/A51 cut-through
- Chester to/from villages to SE (TAG)

The first priority is to reduce these flows (TAG) Physical methods of traffic calming and volume reduction are acceptable to residents if they are effective (Qu)

Conclusions:

TAG recommends the use of single lane 'Village gateways' both to deter through traffic and to reduce vehicle speed on village approach roads. There is strong support for Parish Council efforts to work with City and County representatives and Highways Agency to ensure the village is protected from use by through traffic

2. Size of vehicles

Roads are unsuitable for large vehicles, eg Little Heath Road (Qu/Mtg). Restricted capacity of Rowton Bridge (Qu/Mtg). Inappropriate use of the village caused by use of sat-nav information (TAG). The sat-nav problem is recognized by DfT (TAG)

Conclusions:

TAG recommends emphasizing problem with County Highways

TAG suggests Parish Council writes to DfT to express concerns and offer to trial remedies.

3. Parking in the village centre

Residents are equally divided in their wish to park on Village Road(Qu). Those who did not value the ability to park put a higher priority on the freedom to drive through the village centre (Qu). Parking restricts vehicle speed and attractiveness as a cut-through route (Qu/Mtg)

- Birch Heath Lane to the 'Toast-rack' is a critical length – drivers entering the double bend are unable to see on-coming traffic.
- Parking by residents averages 7-8 vehicles in this critical length and allows use of gaps as passing spaces.
- When there are 20+ vehicles in the critical length 'Saturation' parking occurs – when no passing places are left between parked vehicles traffic is forced onto opposite pavements if total gridlock is to be overcome(TAG).

Critical length for 'saturation' parking

1525 Thursday pm: 22 vehicles parked in critical length – 'saturation' parking

1535 Thursday pm: 10 minutes later – Gridlock

1540 Thursday pm: Car meets A41 bus – car mounting pavement

1544 Thursday pm: Cars ploughing students ahead of them

Thursday pm: Van on pavement even when traffic is light

1545 Thursday pm: Bus running on pavement past Ring o'Bells

'Saturation' parking causes dangerous situations whether traffic is light or heavy (TAG).

It causes most problems at school leaving time when student pedestrians are at risk and school buses use Village Road.

'Saturation' parking is routinely associated with popular sessions at Deva Bridge Club (TAG) – afternoon sessions coincide with High School leaving time.

Vehicles are forced onto the pavement to pass when gridlock occurs(TAG)

Bad parking causes access problems for residents.

At the moment the proprietors of the Ring o'Bells agree to use of their car park if drivers patronize the pub

Conclusions:

'Saturation' parking must be addressed by discussion with the Deva Bridge Club. If parking restrictions become necessary – TAG recommends time limited parking between Birch Heath Lane and the 'Toast-rack' will have the least impact on 'normal' parking by residents. Any restrictions must be enforceable – Community Support Officers regularly attend High School departure times which is when the most severe congestion occurs. Deal with continued 'saturation' parking through the Police. TAG acknowledge that parking restrictions will displace some parking to other residential roads.

4. Parking near the High School

Residents local to High School are being routinely subjected to aggressive and obstructing parking (Mtg/Qu). There have been strenuous efforts by the High School to introduce a 'Park and Stride' scheme (TAG). Enforcement of no parking within 100m of school entrance has freed traffic leaving school. Expansion of student catchment area has increased the demand for personal transport. Parked vehicles obstructing entrances to Smithy Court and Clock House

Conclusions:

The High School has a policy objective to reduce the number of cars used to collect students. TAG recommends assessing the results of the 'Park and Stride' initiative before seeking other solutions. If improvement to the situation is not achieved TAG recommend a ban on parking within 100m of school gates. Enforcement is essential and would depend on sharing support with any Village Road scheme.

5. Changes to the village centre and alternative routes through the village

None of the suggested changes were supported by residents (Qu)

Conclusions:

Take the topic no further until the outcomes from other initiatives are known.

6. Plough Lane/Quarry Lane junction

There is a need to improve pedestrian safety and reduce vehicle speeds (Mtg/TAG). Vehicles which cannot negotiate Rowton Bridge need to be diverted here (Mtg/TAG) Residents strongly support proposals to modify this junction (Qu).

Conclusions:

The TAG fully supports the efforts of the Parish Council to progress this item.

7. Parking near the Primary School

Parking is more orderly than at the High School (TAG). The voluntary one-way system works well (TAG). Residents have requested a small extension to 'No parking' zone near Rowan Park (Qu)

Conclusions:

Minor extension of the No Parking zone should be considered.

8. Parking in Birch Heath Lane and around the Village Green

A majority of local residents are adversely affected by parking in Birch Heath Lane (Qu)

Conclusions:

The TAG concludes that restricting parking in Birch Heath Lane would be ineffective unless routinely enforced (TAG). Nature of any restriction should await a decision on any restrictions in Village Road.

9. Closure of roads

Closure of Rowton Bridge would eliminate A41/A51 cut-through traffic and problems with over-size vehicles (TAG). Understandable objections from a minority of residents who use this route to the A41 (Qu). A clear majority of residents were against any road closure (Qu)

Conclusions:

The TAG recommend no immediate action until the results from changes to Plough Lane/Quarry Lane junction are known.